



WIC Guide for Vendors

2007 Edition

What is WIC?

WIC stands for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children. It provides nutritious foods to supplement the diets of pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, infants, and children under age 5. Eligibility for the program is based on income and nutritional need.

What role do vendors play in the WIC Program?

WIC vendors are partners in the delivery of WIC benefits. The cooperation of vendors allows the program to operate through the retail food system. The WIC Program can make a substantial contribution to food sales.

Most WIC participants receive WIC checks to exchange for foods at approved retail grocery stores. The transaction between a WIC vendor and a WIC participant must be in compliance with the vendor guidelines and policies.

What foods do WIC customers “buy” with WIC checks?

WIC customers exchange WIC checks for specified quantities of a food item. These checks list specific food items for each individual; it is very important that cashiers exchange the exact foods described on the WIC checks. WIC foods, which are high in specific nutrients, include cereal, juice, infant formula, milk, eggs and either peanut butter, dry beans, or peas. Only certain brands or forms of some of these foods meet the program’s strict nutrient requirements. The Rhode Island WIC Program will provide vendors with an up-to-date list of the authorized brands of acceptable foods.

What information is on a WIC check?

- ✓ The first and last dates a WIC customer may use the WIC check to get WIC foods.
- ✓ The date by which the vendor must submit the WIC check to receive payment.
- ✓ A serial number.
- ✓ Blank spaces to fill in the date the WIC check is used, the value of the food bought with the check, and the signature of the WIC customer.
- ✓ Store clerks/cashiers should be trained to review the checks for all the necessary information and to help WIC customers fill them in correctly.

How do vendors redeem WIC checks?

In Rhode Island, WIC checks must be deposited in a bank no later than 30 days from the “last day to use” shown on the check. Any problems with the check redemption process must be reported to the WIC Vendor Unit by calling 1.800.942.7434 or emailing wicvendorsupport@health.ri.gov.

Who administers the WIC Program?

WIC is funded through the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). It is administered in the State of Rhode Island by the Department of Health (HEALTH) through various local health centers and hospitals (or "locals") which determine eligibility, distribute the food funds and provide nutrition education to participants.

The WIC Program expects all participating vendors to:

- ✓ Provide WIC participants only the foods authorized by the RI WIC Program when using a WIC check.
- ✓ Provide these foods at the same prices charged to non-WIC customers.
- ✓ Submit WIC checks for payment within the allowable time limits.
- ✓ Accept WIC checks from WIC participants only within allowable time limits.
- ✓ Not discriminate against any WIC participants because of their race, color, sex, national origin, age, or handicap.

In addition, vendors should:

- ✓ Stock sufficient amounts of authorized WIC foods.
- ✓ Teach store clerks/cashiers how to handle WIC check transactions.
- ✓ Have a current list of authorized WIC foods at each checkout counter.
- ✓ Call the Rhode Island WIC Program if problems occur, 1-800-942-7434.
- ✓ Encourage WIC customers to separate their WIC foods from the rest of their order and tell cashiers when they reach the checkout counter that they will be using WIC checks.

What is the penalty for program violations?

It is very important that vendors and clerks understand and follow program rules. Only through their cooperation can the WIC Program succeed in giving nutritional help to the women and children who need it. Violations of the regulations work against the goals of the program can result in a store's suspension from the program. Violations include:

- Giving participants cash, unauthorized foods, or other items not listed on the WIC check.
- Charging the program for foods not received by participants or charging WIC customers more than other customers for the same food item.

What help will vendors get from government agencies?

The Rhode Island WIC Program will ensure that all of the following information about the program is available:

- ✓ A current copy of the written vendor agreement.
- ✓ FNS guidelines and instructions.
- ✓ An up-to-date list of the allowable WIC foods by brand names.

The Rhode Island WIC Program will:

- ✓ Hold training sessions on handling checks.
- ✓ Provide an adequate procedure for an appeal if a vendor is suspended from the program.

The WIC Program generally makes supplemental foods available to participating women, infants, and children through the retail food system. This means that WIC contributes to food sales and relies on vendor cooperation for success. The result is better health for WIC participants.

For more information about the Rhode Island WIC Program,
contact the Family Health Information Line at 1.800.942.7434.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

WIC Program Cashier's Guide

DO

- Check the foods WIC customers buy against their checks and the list of authorized WIC foods.
- Ask the WIC customer for their Id folder to compare their Id number and signature on the check.
- Write the actual cost of the WIC foods purchased on the WIC check.
- Make sure the WIC customer signs the WIC check at the time of purchase.
- Make sure the WIC check has all information required by the RI WIC Program.

DON'T

- Substitute other foods or items for authorized WIC foods.
- Provide more food than what is listed on the WIC check.
- Accept expired WIC checks.
- Give credit for WIC checks.
- Exchange WIC foods for cash.
- Charge WIC customers more than other customers.

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